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A mobile communication system and a method for connecting a remote workstation to a data communication network via a mobile communication network

5 The invention relates to a mobile communication system comprising a mobile data unit acting via a mobile communication network as a remote workstation in a data network; a mobile exchange; means for establishing a data connection between the mobile data
10 unit and the mobile exchange.

 Mobile communication systems have been developed as there has been a need to free people to leave their desktop telephone terminals and to reach them even when they are outside a specified location. As auto-
15 mation begins to be an integral part of the working environment, people outside offices wish to operate computers everywhere and make connections from any one location to another. The development of mobile communication systems offering voice services in the
20 direction of data services thus seems to be inevitable.

 Computer technology makes it possible to produce lightweight truly portable devices with improved processing power, storage capacity and user friendliness.
25 This evolution of computers has made it technically and economically feasible to offer mobile data services for moving people. In such a case, the user is most likely to possess a mobile telephone terminal for voice communication, so the best way to provide data
30 communication is through the mobile telephone system in much the same way as conventional telephone lines are used for data communication by using modems.

 The entry of digital mobile communication systems, such as the Pan-European mobile radio system
35 GSM, means a break-through when mobile data commun-

ication is to be supported in general-purpose cellular networks. As the GSM is fully digital and applies the general principles of ISDN (Integrated Services Data Network), it is inherently capable of carrying data.

5 From the data networking point of view, the GSM does not represent a dedicated data communication network but an access network. In other words, data communication via the GSM is intended to provide access to actual data networks.

10 The GSM network offers a wide range of services to subscribers. In addition to speech and emergency call services, the GSM network supports all variations of low-speed data communication services offered within telecommunication today. The only restriction is
15 set by the capacity of the radio interface, which restricts the data rate to 9.6 kbit/s.

It is thus also possible to use the GSM system to connect a remote workstation to a desired data communication network, such as a Local Area Network
20 (LAN). The remote workstation is usually a conventional workstation (PC) connected to the data interface of a mobile unit (mobile phone). The remote terminal may thus transmit data via the radio path with a data modem provided in association with the
25 mobile exchange and further by means of a modem connection e.g. through a public telephone network with a second data modem and a data terminal equipment connected to it. This second modem is usually attached to a computer connected to a LAN network. This com-
30 puter is used for enabling remote access to the LAN network. It is usually called an Access Server. The access server has several data communication ports to which modems and a software enabling some kind of remote access are connected. Correspondingly, the
35 remote workstation has to comprise a software in order

that it would be able to communicate with the access server software.

However, the above-described way of connecting a remote workstation via a mobile communication system to a data network has a few disadvantages. First, for instance, the GSM radio path enables a 9.6-kbit/s transmission rate and an excellent bit error rate of the order of 10^{-8} . However, the connection is extended between the mobile communication network and the destination data network by means of a modem connection switched via a public telephone network. The maximum transmission rate of this kind of modem connection is usually 2.4 kbit/s, and its bit error rate is of the order of about 10^{-4} to 10^{-5} . The entire connection will thus have the same transmission rate and bit error rate values, which are clearly inferior to those the GSM network, for instance, is able to offer. Second, the prior art method is not sufficiently efficient from the point of view of the radio path, as it is necessary to use a circuit-switched connection in the mobile communication network and keep the radio resources allocated throughout the LAN session, even during silent periods when there is no kind of communication.

The object of the invention is to connect a remote workstation via a mobile communication system to a data network in such a way that the problems mentioned above will be alleviated or avoided.

This is achieved by a mobile communication system disclosed in the preamble, which according to the invention is characterized in that the arrangement further comprises an interconnecting computer attached to the mobile exchange, the interconnecting computer extending the connection and simulating the remote workstation towards said data network.

Another aspect of the invention is a method for connecting a remote workstation via a mobile communication network to a data network, the method comprising starting a session from the remote workstation; 5 establishing a data connection over the radio path in the mobile communication network for the data session; and extending the connection between the mobile communication network and the data network. According to the invention the method is characterized by temporarily releasing said data connection in the mobile 10 communication network during the data session, and when the data connection has been released

a) said extended connection is maintained towards the data network;

15 b) the operation of the remote workstation is simulated towards the data network at the end of the extended connection on the side of the mobile communication network; and

c) communication addressed from the data network 20 to the remote workstation is monitored, and, if required, a notification is transmitted to the remote workstation over the radio path by non-switched message transmission.

The basic idea of the invention is to facilitate 25 more flexible (more efficient from the view point of costs and radio resources) connectivity via the radio path by using a special interconnecting computer in association with the mobile exchange for extending connections to the destination data network. This 30 interconnecting computer thus acts as a gateway between a remote workstation using the mobile communication network and its home data network; simulates the operation of the remote workstation towards the data network; and takes care of the actual remote 35 workstation which resides behind the radio path. A

data connection established over the radio path can be disconnected so as to minimize the air time when the radio path is not needed for data communication, but the interconnecting computer keeps the extended connection active towards the data network. The interconnecting computer transmits the remote workstation a notification by utilizing non-switched message transmission when data communication with the data network is required, and so the remote workstation may start re-establishment of the data connection on the radio path. The remote workstation may also itself start the re-establishment of the data connection if it wishes to. The applications of the remote workstation see the data communication link as active and so does the data network at the other end of the extended connection. The invention thus allows a virtual connection to be maintained throughout the session; on the other hand, radio resources are allocated only when data communication is actually needed. In addition, the interconnecting computer is connected directly to a suitable LAN network or wide area network, so that modem connections established through a conventional telephone network are avoided while utilizing the full data transmission rate of the radio path and the high bit error rate.

In the following the invention will be described with reference to the attached drawings, in which

Figure 1 illustrates a mobile communication network according to the invention and its connection to data networks, and

Figure 2 is a more detailed block diagram of the connection of an exchange MSC shown in Figure 1 to an interconnecting computer 19.

The present invention is suitable for use in all digital mobile communication systems for connecting a

remote workstation to a data network. It can be applied particularly advantageously in the Pan-European digital mobile communication system GSM and other similar digital systems, such as DCS1800 and PCN (Personal Communication Network). Although the preferred embodiment of the invention will be described below referring to an application in the GSM system, the invention is not limited to it.

The ETSI GSM specifications and *The GSM System Mobile Communications*, by M. Moyly & M. B. Pautet, Palaiseau, France, ISBN: 2-9507190-0-7, are referred to for the more detailed structure and operation of the GSM system.

Figure 1 schematically shows a part of a GSM cellular radio system. In the cellular radio system, the area covered by the system is divided into radio cells. Base station systems BSS (a single system is shown in the figure) are connected to a mobile exchange MSC 10 by digital transmission links 4 (a single link is shown in the figure). Each base stations system BSS comprises a base station controller BSC (not shown), to which one or more base stations BTS (not shown) are similarly connected by digital transmission links. The radio coverage area of one base station BTS typically forms one radio cell. Each base station BTS1 to BTS4 has a predetermined number of physical radio channels. A GSM signal (physical channel) consists of TDMA frames each containing preferably eight time slots in which logical channels are transferred. Logical channels contain traffic channels for calls (voice and data) established with mobile radio stations MS residing in the cell, and control channels for signalling with mobile radio stations MS (mobile units) residing in the cell. A speech connection, V.110-rated 64-kbit/s

full-duplex data connection or 9.6/4.8/2.4 kbit/s data connection can be established on the traffic channels. A special adapter is typically needed at both ends of the data connection for adapting the data connection to the terminal equipment and/or other communication lines/communication systems. The adapter associated with the mobile unit is usually called a terminal adapter and the adapter at the network end a network termination IWF. In the GSM mobile radio network, this kind of network termination is located in conjunction with the mobile exchange MSC.

For the sake of clarity, Figure 2 shows only a switching field 11 and call control of the mobile exchange MSC 10; in this specific case, the call control is a decentralized computer system comprising computers 12, 13 and an interconnecting message bus 14. In practice, the MSC may contain a great number of different devices. The switching field 11 may be an analog or a digital switching means, which selectively switches speech and data connections from the base station system BSS between inbound transmission lines 4 and transmission lines 5 from the mobile exchange. As an example of such digital mobile exchanges, the DX 200 MSC of Nokia can be mentioned.

A network termination unit 15 (IWF) is connected in parallel with the switching field 11. One or more further network termination units may be similarly connected in parallel with the switching field 11. The network termination unit 15 comprises a transmission unit COCA 24 on the side of a port P1. The COCA takes care of functions required by the transmission connection between the exchange MSC and the base station BTS, such as multiplexing. In the specific case, the transmission connection is a 2-Mbit/s PCM connection on which 30 channels are transmitted. For each channel

there is provided a data communication service adapter
DASA 17, to which the COCA 24 connects the channel and
which provides matching between the GSM data con-
nection and a V.24 interface 18. For conventional
5 modem connections to be established via a public
switched telephone network PSTN, the network termin-
ation unit 15 comprises a group 16 of three data
modems of different types. The control interface of
the modem is connected to the V.24 interface 18, and
10 its line or modem interface is connected to the
switching field 11.

In Figure 1, the remote workstation equipment
comprises a mobile radio station 3 (MS) and a remote
workstation 4 (e.g. a personal computer PC) attached
15 to it. For data communication, the above-mentioned
data connection from the remote workstation 3, 4 to
the exchange MSC 10 is established by means of a radio
link between the mobile radio station 3 (mobile tele-
phone) and the base station system BSS on a logical
20 traffic channel.

Referring to Figure 2, the switching field 11
switches a data connection to the network termination
unit 15 for conventional data communication by means
of modems. In the network termination unit, one of the
25 DASAs 17 adapts the data connection to the V.24 inter-
face 18 and through it to the data modems 16. The line
interface (modem interface) of the data modems 16 is
connected to a conventional wired connection, which in
this specific case is connected e.g. via the public
30 switched telephone network PSTN to another data modem
(not shown). The modems signal in a normal way over a
modem connection established between them. The remote
workstation 3, 4 in turn controls the operation of the
data modem 16 via the GSM data connection and trans-
mits data to and receives data from the data modem 16,
35

respectively.

In the preferred embodiment of the invention shown in Figure 1, an interconnecting computer 19 is attached to the exchange MSC for connections to other data networks, such as LAN networks. This interconnecting computer, which will be called the AGENT 19 hereinbelow, establishes a bus between the remote workstation 4 and a desired LAN. The network termination unit 15 has at least one of the DASAs 17 dedicated to interfacing a 9.6-kbit/s GSM data connection to the V.24 interface, which in turn is connected to the AGENT computer 19. In other words, the AGENT computer 19 is connected to the MSC as a kind of PAD (Packet Assembly/Disassembly), for which the GSM recommendations define special interfacing. No kind of modems are needed.

The AGENT computer 19 is preferably a commercial computer typically running an OS/2 2.x, Windows NT or UNIX operating system. In the preferred embodiment of the invention shown in Figure 1, the GSM operator has its own local LAN segment 20 dedicated to interconnecting the MSC, the AGENT computer 19 and several customer LANs. The AGENT computer 19 is connected directly to this local LAN segment 20.

In the preferred embodiment of the invention, the protocol applied towards the public data network is TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol). In other words, the solution according to the invention offers the IP service for the remote workstations of the mobile communication network. The protocol between the remote workstation 4 and the AGENT computer 19 is the Virtual Channel Protocol (VCP) specified and developed by Nokia Inc. The VCP is below the IP layer. The remote workstation 4 has a dedicated GSM/IP address in addition to its possible

home IP address. The GSM/IP address is assigned by the GSM/data network operator, and a router 21, which connects the customer's home LAN e.g. to a public Internet network 22, is configured to process this
5 GSM/IP address. In addition, the mobile communication network has special GSM/ARP (GSM specific Address Resolution Protocol) and GSM/RARP (GSM specific Reverse Address Resolution Protocol) protocols. The GSM/ARP is used to determine the GSM telephone number
10 from the IP address, and the GSM/RARP is used to determine the IP address from the GSM telephone number.

A remote workstation 4 that wishes to start a data session dials the telephone number reserved for
15 the AGENT computer 19 and starts the establishment of a GSM data connection between the mobile unit MS 3 and the exchange MSC 10, and so the switching field 11 routes the data call to the network termination unit 15 to which the AGENT computer 19 is connected. The
20 AGENT computer 19 comprises a database containing information about subscribers authorized to use the data services. The AGENT computer 19 checks the subscriber authorization and creates an Agent Process to serve this new connection. The AGENT computer 19 then
25 extends the connection to a customer LAN 24 through a router 23. The AGENT computer 19 simulates the operation of the remote workstation towards the customer LAN 24 located at the other end of the extended connection.

30 When the user of the remote workstation 4 wishes to free/release the radio connection, he/she informs the AGENT computer 19 that MS 3 and remote workstation 4 will be in a manual release state from now on. The AGENT computer 19 maintains the extended connection
35 and continues to act as a remote workstation towards

the customer-LAN by monitoring communication addressed to the remote workstation 4. If there occurs something in the customer-LAN that concerns the remote workstation 4 (e.g. electronic mail), the AGENT computer 19 informs the remote workstation 4 via the radio path by means of non-switched message transmission, such as the GSM short message service (SMS). The user thus has the responsibility to re-establish the GSM data connection to the AGENT computer 19 for certain measures (such as reading electronic mail).

Another alternative is to use automatic release of a GSM data connection. The data communication software of the remote workstation 4 releases the connection automatically when a sufficiently long break, i.e. a predetermined period of time, has occurred in the data communication. The duration of the break may be negotiated at the outset of each connection establishment. The AGENT computer 19 maintains the extended connection and continues to operate as a remote workstation towards the customer LAN 24. If the remote workstation 4 has data to be transmitted towards the customer LAN, the telecommunication software establishes a data connection to the AGENT computer 19. If the customer LAN 24 has data to be transmitted to the remote workstation 4, the AGENT computer 19 transmits a short message to the telecommunication software of the remote workstation 4, and the software then re-establishes the data connection. As the AGENT computer 19 is already operating, and the extended connection to the LAN 24 has already been set up, the establishment of the data connection to the AGENT computer 19 is all that is needed, and so the time required for re-establishing the connection is considerably shorter.

It is possible to omit the local LAN segment 20

of the GSM operator shown in the figure, integrate the AGENT computer 19 and the router 23, and connect this integrated unit directly to a telecommunication network 22.

- 5 Also in other respects, the figures and the description related to them are only intended to illustrate the present invention. In its details the invention may vary within the spirit and scope of the attached claims.

Claims:

1. Mobile communication system comprising
a mobile data unit (3, 4) acting via a mobile
5 communication network as a remote workstation in a
data network (24);
a mobile exchange (10, 15);
means for establishing a data connection between
the mobile data unit (3, 4) and the mobile exchange
10 (10, 15);
c h a r a c t e r i z e d in that the arrangement
further comprises an interconnecting computer (19)
attached to the mobile exchange (10, 15), the inter-
connecting computer extending the connection and
15 simulating the remote workstation (3, 4) towards said
data network (24).
2. Mobile communication system according to
claim 1, c h a r a c t e r i z e d in that the mobile
exchange (10, 15) establishes a data connection and
20 routes it to the interconnecting computer (19) in
response to a predetermined number of the inter-
connecting computer dialled by the mobile data unit
(3, 4).
3. Mobile communication system according to
25 claim 1 or 2, c h a r a c t e r i z e d in that the
interconnecting computer (19) maintains the extended
connection towards said data network when the data
connection between the mobile data unit and the mobile
exchange is released temporarily during the session.
- 30 4. Mobile communication system according to
claim 1, c h a r a c t e r i z e d in that said data
network (24) is a local area network (LAN), preferably
a TCP/IP network.
- 35 5. Mobile communication system according to
claim 1, c h a r a c t e r i z e d in that the system

comprises a local area network (20), to which the interconnecting computer (19) is connected.

6. Method for connecting a remote workstation to a data network via a mobile communication network, the method comprising

starting a session from the remote workstation;
establishing a data connection over the radio path in the mobile communication network for the data session;

10 extending the connection between the mobile communication network and the data network;
c h a r a c t e r i z e d by

temporarily releasing said data connection in the mobile communication network during the data session, and when the data connection has been released

a) said extended connection is maintained towards the data network;

20 b) the operation of the remote workstation is simulated towards the data network at the end of the extended connection on the side of the mobile communication network; and

25 c) communication addressed from the data network to the remote workstation is monitored, and, if required, a notification is transmitted to the remote workstation over the radio path by non-switched message transmission.

7. Method according to claim 6, c h a r a c t e r i z e d in that said data connection is re-established in the mobile communication network during the session on the initiative of the remote workstation.

8. Method according to claim 6 or 7, c h a r a c t e r i z e d in that said release of the data connection is started manually by the user of the

remote workstation.

- 5 9. Method according to claim 6 or 7, characterized in that said release of the data connection is started automatically after a predetermined period of time has elapsed from the last communication event on the data connection.

- 10 10. Method according to claim 9, characterized in that said predetermined period of time is negotiated at the outset of each data session.

11. Method according to claim 6, characterized in that said non-switched message transmission is carried out as short-message transmission.

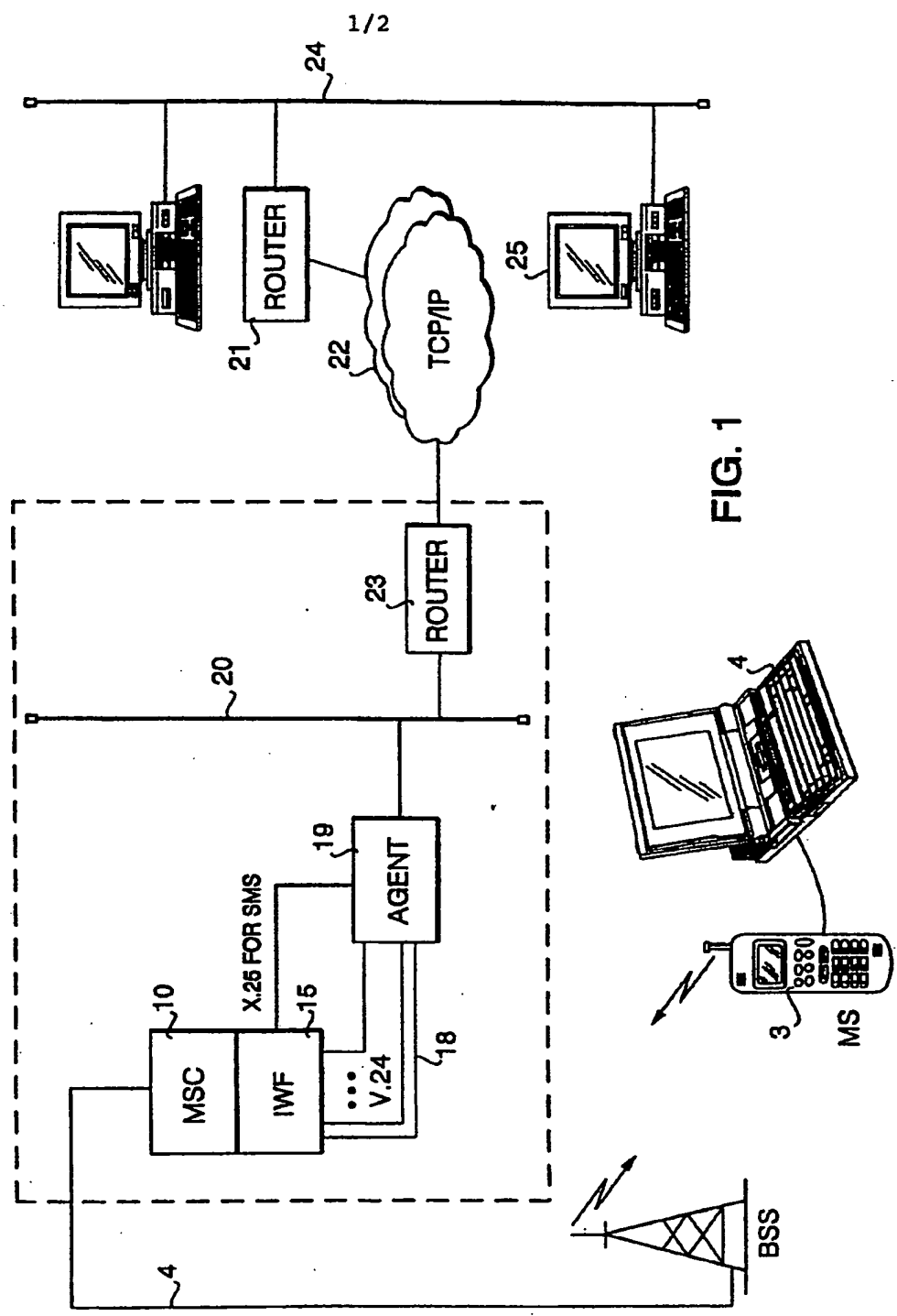
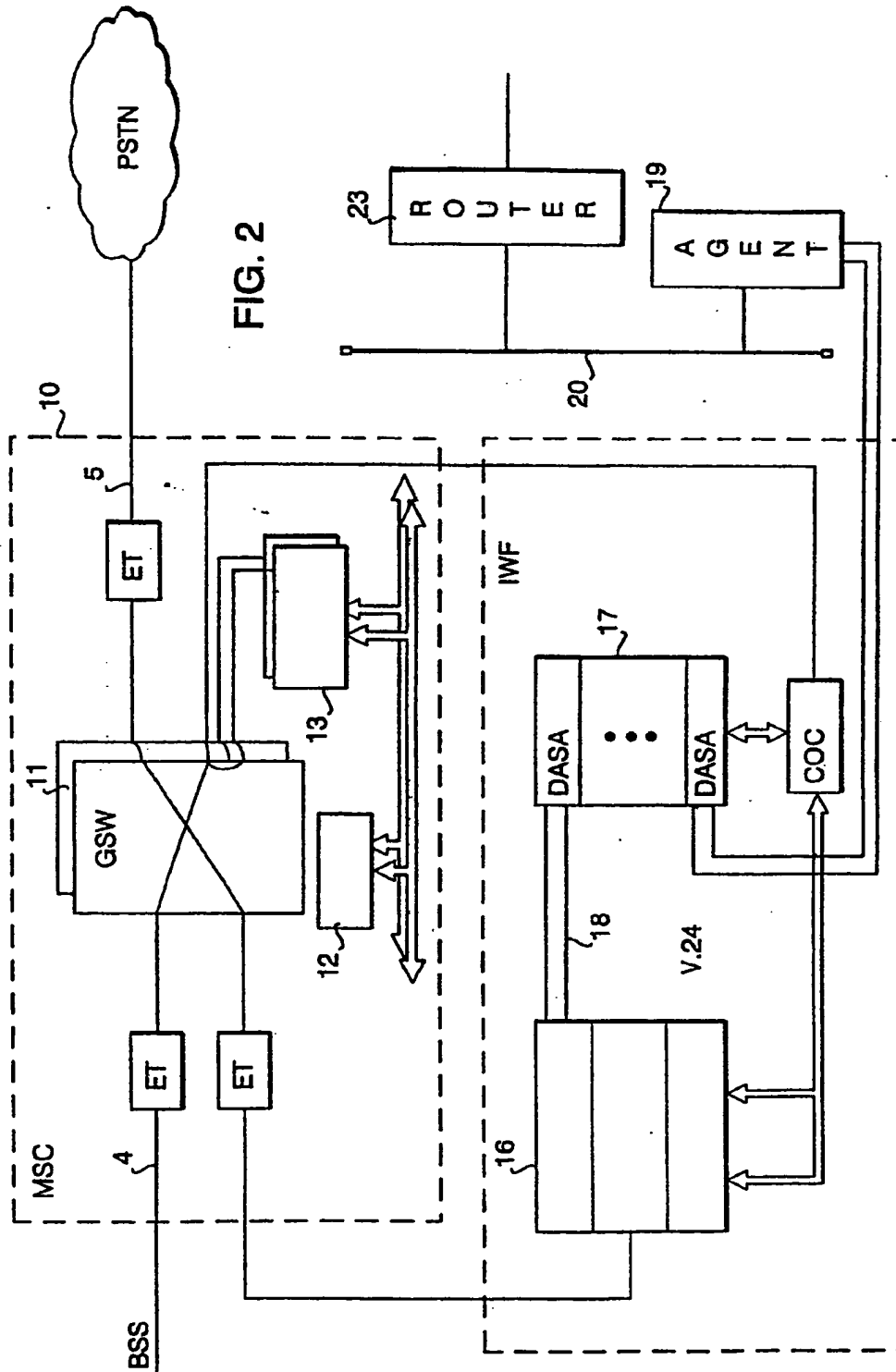


FIG. 1

2/2



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

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A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC6: H04Q 7/22, H04L 12/28

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC6: H04Q, H04L

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

SE,DK,FI,NO classes as above

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	EP, A2, 0332825 (MOTOROLA, INC), 20 Sept 1989 (20.09.89), column 3, line 55 - column 5, line 28; column 7, line 22 - column 9, line 32, figures 1,4, 6	1-3,6,7,8,9
Y		4,5
A		10,11
Y	EP, A1, 0483547 (INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MACHINES CORPORATION), 6 May 1992 (06.05.92), figure 4, abstract	4,5

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.☒ See patent family annex.

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT
Information on patent family members

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International application No.
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Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
EP-A2- 0332825	20/09/89	CA-A- 1281078 JP-A- 1274523 US-A- 4837800	05/03/91 02/11/89 06/06/89
EP-A1- 0483547	06/05/92	JP-A- 4227149 US-A- 5159592	17/08/92 27/10/92